

## FANTASIA AND DEFENSE

the husband and wife, arm-in-arm in the darkening park, are set upon by a gang of youths. the savages pinion the man to watch and listen as they rape and torture his woman. two pedestrians observe the scene: one joins the assault, while the other summons the police. the police arrive in time to arrest the delinquents. one cop comforts the woman; one adds to her humiliation. everyone is made uncomfortable and contemptuous at the spectacle of the husband.

the newspapers indict the violence of today's youth and the bad sense of the victims. a jury takes two days to return verdicts of guilty on two hundred and fourteen counts, not guilty on one hundred seventeen. the judge assigns the maximum determinate sentences, regretting that the law does not allow him to send all of them to the chair. that evening he gets even drunker than usual, and calls in sick the next day.

i am the wife, the husband, the rapists, the good and bad samaritans, the police, the reporters, the public, and the judge.

so are you.

## GIRLS' NIGHT OUT

i call her to inquire how the wedding shower went.

she says, "it turns out that s. has recently been born again, so my gift from frederick's of hollywood was not greatly appreciated."

"any booze?"

"not a drop."



"what did you do?"

"first we all stuffed ourselves on macaroni salad,  
even though i, believe it or not,  
was the least obese person in the place.  
then we played 'newlywed games.'  
like 'according to government statistics,  
how often does the average husband hug his wife  
after one, two, five, ten, twenty-five  
years of marriage?'"

"what was the answer?"

"what would you have guessed?"

"i would have started low  
and dropped off steeply."

"you would have won the grand prize:  
an assortment of evangelical bumper stickers."

#### A BIT CLOSE TO HOME

a friend of mine,  
judy seal, wrote a poem  
about her salvadoran babysitter  
telling of having watched death squads  
burst into classrooms  
and machine gun her professors.

she admitted the professors  
were generally not sympathetic to the regime  
and that the guerillas were sometimes guilty  
of deliberately staging shootouts where civilians  
were sure to be caught in the crossfire.  
nonetheless i think the blowing-away of professors  
in mid-lecture  
is a serious violation  
of academic freedom.

#### THE TEST

my youngest daughter and my youngest son  
think, like siblings everywhere,  
that they hate each other.  
the older often announces, matter-of-factly,  
that she wishes the younger were dead.